FECN11 CWIS 181800
THIRTY DAY FORECAST FOR THE GREAT LAKES FOR MID-FEBRUARY TO MID-MARCH ISSUED JOINTLY BY THE CANADIAN ICE SERVICE OF ENVIRONMENT CANADA AND THE U.S. NATIONAL ICE CENTER OF THE UNITED STATES ON 18 FEBRUARY 2004.

Lake Superior

Generally near to slightly above normal temperatures characterized the first half of February. Ice extent is less than normal over the entire lake.

Forecast ice conditions from February 18th to February 29th.

Temperatures are forecast to be above normal for the rest of the month of February. Ice growth will slow down especially in the western section of the lake. Ice along the northwestern section of the lake continue to expand and extent to about 30 miles from the shore by the end of the month. Most of the western half of the lake from the Keweenaw Peninsula westward will be covered with mostly thin and medium ice however the central section will have looser conditions. Some thinner or open water conditions will develop along the northwestern shore during the last part of February. The southern section of the lake will have areas of very close pack medium and thin lake ice with some sections of consolidated thick lake ice especially around the Apostle Islands. The ice along the south shore east of the Keweenaw Peninsula will be within 5 to 15 miles of the shore. Whitefish Bay will continue to remain consolidated with thick lake ice during the second half of February. From Whitefish Bay northward to Michipicoten Bay east of Michipicoten Island, ice will be mostly close to very close pack thin and medium lake ice with some new lake ice. The ice in this area will expand to about 20 to 30 miles from the shore by the end of the month. Along the north shore from Michipicoten Bay to around Marathon a narrow band of new and thin lake ice will form during the second half of the month. The remainder of the lake will have mostly open water.

Forecast ice conditions from March 1st to March 15th.

Generally above normal temperatures are forecast for the first half of March. Little ice expansion is forecast to occur during this period. Ice along the northwestern shore will remain within 30 to 40 miles of the shore. The western portion of the lake will show signs of looser ice conditions, mostly in the central portion as well as along the shore from Thunder Bay to Duluth. The ice concentration along the south shore will decrease to open drift to close pack medium and thin lake ice with some narrow bands of very close pack near the shore by mid-month. Ice east of the Keweenaw Peninsula will remain within 5 to 15 miles of the shore. Some of the consolidated ice in western Whitefish Bay will begin to break-up by the middle of March. Ice concentration along the eastern shore from Whitefish Bay northward to Michipicoten Bay will also decrease. The area along the north shore from around Michipicoten Island to the entrance to Nipigon Bay will become open water during the first week of March. Elsewhere mostly open water.

Lake Huron and Georgian Bay

Generally near normal temperatures were reported during the first two weeks of February. As a result the ice extent over Lake Huron was near normal except along the western shore section of the lake where greater than normal ice extent was observed at mid-February.

Forecast ice conditions from February 18th to February 29th.

Temperatures will be slightly above normal for the last half of February. No change is forecast for the consolidated ice in the North Channel during the period. The ice along the southern shore of Manitoulin Island westward towards the Straits of Mackinac will decrease in concentration. The southern extent of the ice along the southern shore of Manitoulin Island will remain about 5 to 10 miles from the shore. The consolidated thick lake ice will remain during the last half of February in the Straits of Mackinac. The band of ice along the western shore will become narrower with decreasing ice concentration. By the end of the month only a very narrow strip of ice will prevail north of Saginaw Bay. South of Saginaw Bay into southern Lake Huron, ice will cover most of this area however the concentration in the western and central sections will decrease during the period. Only the eastern shore of southern Lake Huron will have very close pack thick and medium lake ice with some embedded very thick lake ice by the end of the month. Further north along the eastern Lake Huron shore, the band of ice will become narrower during the last half of February. In Georgian Bay, the looser ice conditions in the southwestern section of the bay will continue to expand slowly with some open water areas developing during the period. The remainder of the bay will continue to be covered with medium and thick lake ice. The rest of Lake Huron will be mostly open water.

Forecast ice conditions from March 1st to March 15th.

Near to above normal temperatures are forecast for the first half of March. No change is forecast for the consolidated ice in the North Channel during the period. Ice along the southern shore of Manitoulin Island will continue to narrow due to ice melt and destruction during the first half of March. By the middle of the month, only a few narrow bands of thick and medium lake ice will remain. The northwestern portion of the lake will have some decrease in ice concentration; however no significant change is anticipated for the Straits of Mackinac. The ice along the western shore of the lake north of Saginaw Bay will continue to narrow and decrease in concentration. Consolidated ice in northern Saginaw Bay will begin to break up by the middle of March. Further south along the western shore, an open water lead will develop into southern Lake Huron. The eastern shore of the lake will continue to have some areas of higher concentration however the extent will decrease during the period as westerly winds pushes the ice near the shore. The overall concentration of ice in Georgian Bay will begin to decrease near the middle of March. Some open water areas will develop in southwestern portion of the bay. The rest of Lake Huron will be open water by mid-March

Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair

Near to slightly below normal temperatures were observed over the region during the first two weeks of February. The entire Lake Erie remained covered with ice during the period. Ice conditions are near normal.

Forecast ice conditions from February 18th to February 29th.

Temperatures are forecast to be above normal for the second half of February. The consolidated ice in Lake St Claire will begin to break up during the next two weeks. The ice in the western portion of the lake will break up first and spread eastward during the period. Thinner ice conditions with some open water leads will develop along the north shore of Lake Erie and the western portion of the Western Basin. The southern and eastern portion of the lake will continue to have significant concentrations of medium and thick lake ice. Occasional ice pressure will develop in the lake.

Forecast ice conditions from March 1st to March 15th.

Near to above normal temperatures are forecast for the first two weeks of March. The ice in Lake St Clair will begin to melt giving generally weaker ice concentrations. By mid-month, some areas of open water will develop in northern and western sections. Ice concentrations will continue to decrease in the Western Basin and give way to mostly open water conditions along the western shore of the basin by the end of the first week of March. The rest of the basin will be covered with looser medium and thick lake ice. The western portion of the south shore of Lake Erie will also see some open water leads developing during the first week of March while the open water along the north shore will continue to widen. By mid-month, most of the Western Basin as well the western portion of Lake Erie will be open water except for a few patches of rotting thick lake ice. The eastern portion of the lake will see a decrease in concentration with open water in Long Point Bay. The exception will be extreme eastern Lake Erie where concentration will remain high by mid-month.

Lake Ontario

Temperatures were near normal during the past two weeks. The ice extent is greater than normal for this time of year.

Forecast ice conditions from February 18th to February 29th.

Temperatures will be near to slightly above normal during the last half of February. The narrow bands of ice along the north shore west of Prince Edward County as well as the south shore will melt during the next two weeks. Ice along the southern shore of Prince Edward County as well as Prince Edward Bay will persist until the end of the month. No change in the consolidated thick lake ice in the St Lawrence River. The rest of the lake will remain open water to ice free.

Forecast ice conditions from March 1st to March 15th.

Near normal temperatures are forecast for the beginning of March. The area of ice in northeastern Lake Ontario will shrink somewhat but will remain mostly medium and thin lake ice. The area of ice south of Prince Edward County will melt away early in the period. The consolidated ice in the St Lawrence River will persist throughout the period. The rest of the lake will remain open water to ice free.

Lake Michigan

Near to below normal temperatures were observed over the first half of February. Ice extent over most of the lake is somewhat greater than normal. The exception is the extreme northern portion of the lake where less than normal ice extent was observed.

Forecast ice conditions from February 18th to February 29th.

Temperatures are forecast to be near to above normal during the last two weeks of February. Some of the consolidated ice in northern Green Bay will continue to break up during the period. The ice along the western coast from the entrance to Green Bay southward will decrease in concentration however the extent will remain the same by the end of the month. The area of medium and thick lake ice in southwestern Lake Michigan will continue to move northward slowly during the period. However the ice extent will decrease as westerly winds and milder temperatures causes some ice destruction. Further north along the eastern shore ice concentration will decrease with some sections becoming open water south of Grand Traverse Bay by the end of the month. The large area of consolidated ice from the Straits of Mackinac eastward to Beaver Island and northward to the coast will begin to show signs of break-up around Beaver Island by the end of the month. The area of medium and thick lake ice south and west of the consolidated ice will retreat slowly northeastward by the end of the month. The rest of the lake will remain mostly open water.

Forecast ice conditions from March 1st to March 15th.

The consolidated ice in northern Green Bay will continued to break up. By mid-month, the ice in the northern third of the bay will be mobile while the rest of the bay will remain consolidated. Ice along most of the shore will melt during the first week of March. The exception will be the northern section of the lake. The area of consolidated ice will continue to slowly break up and will be located about 10 to 15 miles northeast of Beaver Island by mid-month. From near Beaver Island to the edge of the consolidated ice, close to very close pack thick and medium lake ice will persist. The remainder of the lake will be open water to ice free.

Figure 1: Ice forecast, Western Great Lakes – 1 March, 2004.

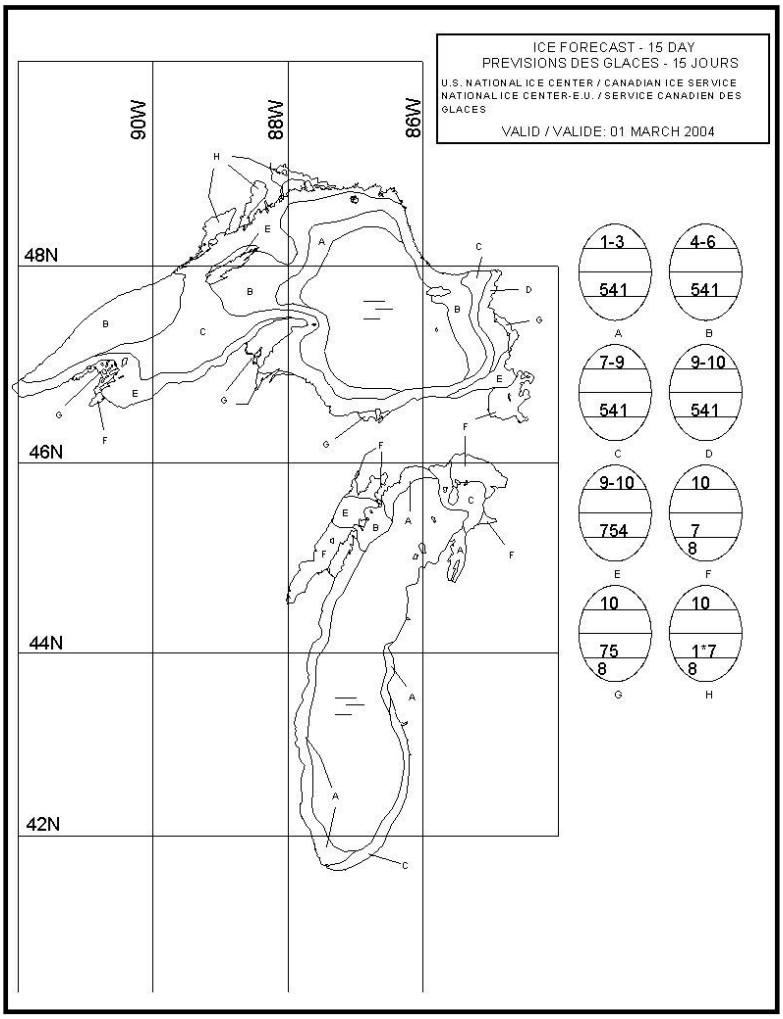


Figure 2: Ice Forecast, Western Great Lakes– 15 March, 2004.

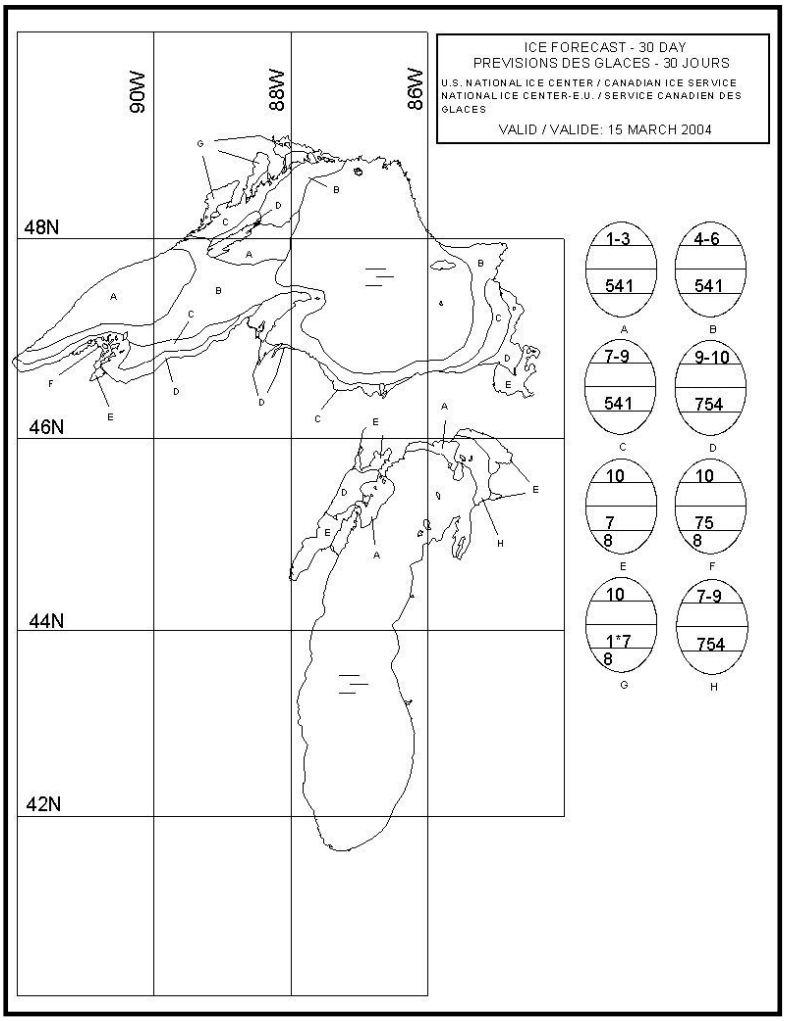


Figure 3: Ice Forecast, Eastern Great Lakes – 1 March, 2004.

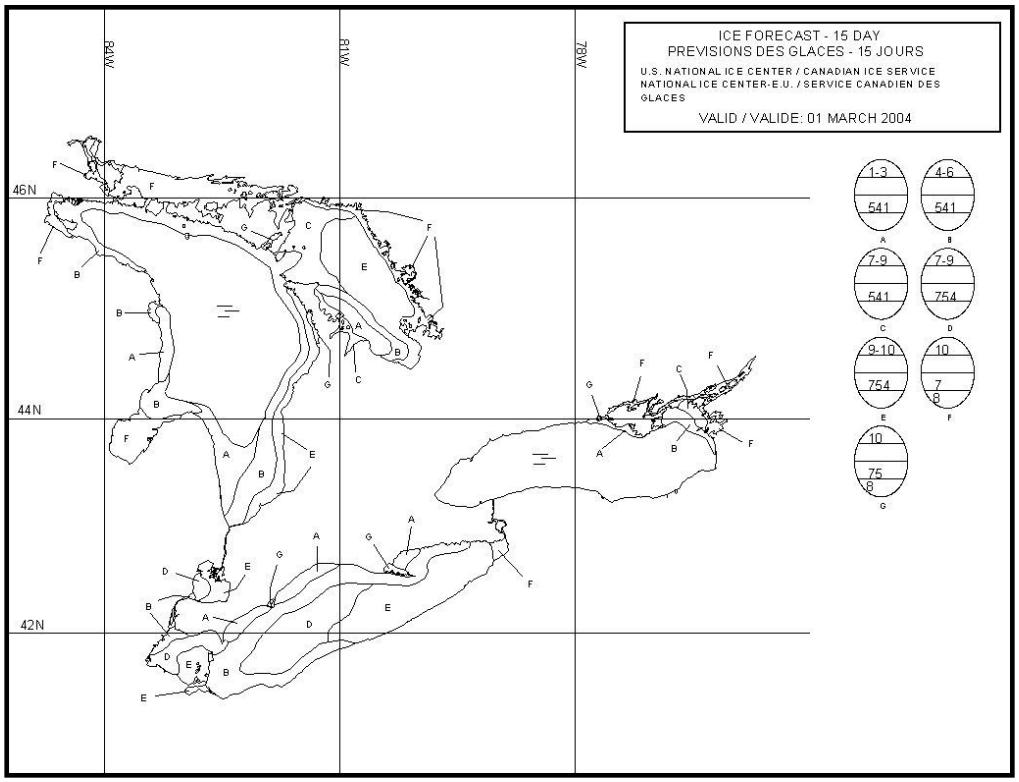
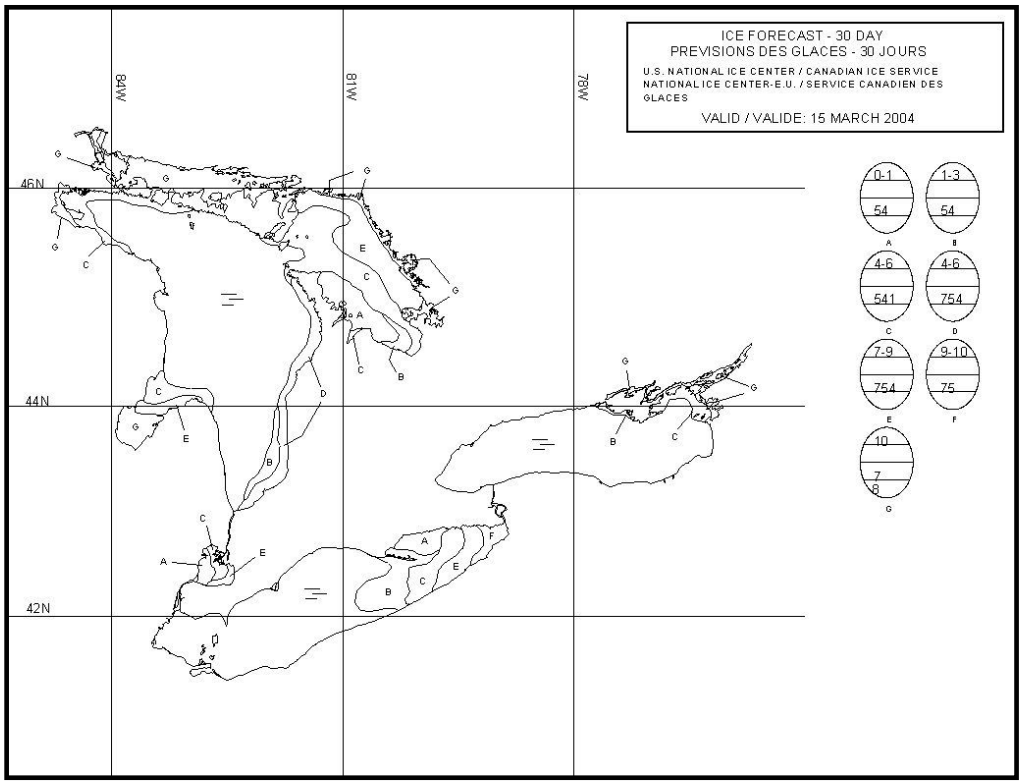


Figure 4: Ice Forecast, Eastern Great Lakes – 15 March, 2004.



THE NEXT 30 DAY FORECAST WILL BE ISSUED ON 3 MARCH 2004.
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